It is not the poor farmers growing cannabis and coca who are the criminals. The criminals are the drug barons, the traffickers, the money-launderers, the ones who pull the strings in the background, who make big money with these poisonous wares, who practice their dirty trade in obscure corners of our large cities and on the streets outside our schools. They are ruthless, treacherous seducers and we must put them out of business.

Drugs destroy body and mind. The happiness they promise is in reality a deadly illusion. Drugs shatter families and undermine the foundations of society. Where there are drugs, there is always crime: organized crime by the traffickers and crimes committed by the drug users to fund their habit. And where the drug mafia and terrorism join forces, they ultimately imperil peace as well.

Nowhere is the need for partnership and cooperation more urgent than in the fight against drugs. The internationally operating producer and trafficker syndicates set up base above all in those countries that so far lack the defences to keep them at bay. But we must not allow new opium and cocaine highways to develop.

Since the last special session of the General Assembly on this issue, in 1990, we have made some progress, but clearly we have not yet managed to reverse the trend. The figures speak for themselves. Only by applying all our energies to the common task do we stand a chance of success. Our strategy must tackle cultivation and production, trade and consumption. I would like to pay tribute at this point to all those involved in the crusade against drugs, particularly the staff of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme.

Unfortunately, in Germany since 1995 we have seen a steady increase in the number of first-time users of hard drugs, a rise of 20 per cent last year alone.

We are not standing idly by. In the programme of action we have launched and in our overall drug policy we are pursuing a three-pronged approach: prevention and education, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts and crime prevention and control.

In the fight against drugs no one can pass the buck, no one can deny responsibility. There is a need for solidarity, for mutual help. Thus, Germany has earmarked 166 million deutsche marks under a four-year programme to help drug-producing and transit countries with training and advisory services. In 32 countries liaison officers from the Federal Criminal Police Office are supporting the fight against drugs and organized crime.

In the development cooperation sector, too, we are gearing our activities to the fight gainst drugs. In the countries of origin we can only expect farmers to stop growing narcotics crops if we offer them viable alternatives. Since 1990 we have allocated some DM 400 million to such programmes.

It is the enormous profits to be made that keeps the drug trade booming. The drug barons use every possible means to launder their ill-gotten gains. Since 1992 money-laundering has been a punishable offence in Germany, and a range of judicial and administrative measures have been adopted to combat it. Only by seizing the assets of traffickers and their associates can the drug mafia be dealt a decisive blow.

Unfortunately, there are still too many countries that have not yet acceded to the 1988 Vienna Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances or are not implementing it fully. That has to change.

In this area good progress is now being made towards effective regional coordination of drug policy. We welcome the joint declaration of the five South-East Asian countries and China.

This special session of the Assembly must clearly signal our strength of purpose. We will not give up the fight. We must forge new alliances with prevention as our aim. Raising awareness is the name of the game. Everyone must play their part: parents, educators, politicians and the media. Drugs and the harm they do must not be minimized. They are no token of a modern lifestyle. Seduction by stealth is what drugs are all about, and therein lies the danger. To combat their insidious influence we need to encourage positive, responsible and caring attitudes towards life, and we need to encourage an alternative development policy in the countries that need our help. Our young people need values and perspectives that will make the junkie's pills and needles redundant.

One thing is vital: those who have become dependent require solidarity and help. We must not leave them to fight their battle against addiction on their own. We must help them to find their way back to a normal life. Prevention, care, support and rehabilitation must go together.

This special session is further impressive testimony to the international strategy to combat drugs. We will all be taking on new political commitments. Only through an unrelenting, passionate crusade can we save those now in the clutches of the dealers and save others from ever starting.

"No power to drugs!" That is the slogan of an anti-drug campaign of the German media and sports organizations. That must be our slogan, too, for the worldwide fight against drugs.

The President: I thank the Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam.

Mr. Pham Gia Khiem (Viet Nam): This special session of the General Assembly is an event of great importance, and it stands as a great contribution to humankind before the turn of the century. Here leaders of the United Nations Member States will jointly renew their common will and determination to combat a formidable peril facing human beings — namely, the production of trafficking in and abuse of drugs. This social evil, coupled with HIV/AIDS, poverty and environmental degradation, is eroding the morale and health of some population groups, youngsters in particular; is undermining many countries' stability; and is threatening the existence and development of mankind.

We wish to express our great appreciation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for having selected the most critical issues for deliberations at this session. In particular, the reduction of demand for drugs is a key issue that requires global efforts.

As a poor country that has to focus its efforts on solving many socio-economic problems so as to improve the people's living conditions, Viet Nam is giving its constant and full attention to illicit drug prevention and control.

It is stipulated in our Constitution that

"the illicit production, trafficking, distribution, storage and use of opium and other narcotic drugs are strictly forbidden".

Our Government has established the national drug prevention and control commission, under the chairmanship of a Deputy Prime Minister.

Through strong resolve and drastic measures we have attained considerable, though preliminary, results. Poppy planting decreased by 80 per cent as compared with the 1980s. Drug traffickers have been convicted of serious crimes. The country's legal system, particularly the criminal code, has been revised and amended as necessary to strengthen the effect of drug control. Treatment for many addicts is being provided both at their homes and in rehabilitation centres. Public condemnation against the manufacture, sale and use of illicit drugs has been broadened.

The Vietnamese Government attaches great importance to cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, with countries and organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol). Viet Nam has acceded to the 1961, 1971 and 1988 international Conventions on drug prevention and control and entered into cooperation with many countries, especially regional countries. We are participating in the cooperative efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on drug prevention and control. We have signed the East Asian subregional agreement on drug control and are carrying out several projects on the basis of memorandums of understanding. Talks on bilateral cooperation agreements with Laos, Russia and the United States are under way; information exchanges have been conducted on a regular basis with Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and Germany.

However, due to its geographic features, its long and difficult to control borders, its proximity to the Golden Triangle and its expanding trade and tourism, Viet Nam can easily be used by international drug traffickers as a transit point. In the meantime, our drug control forces are faced with tremendous difficulties in their work because of lack of experience and of technical facilities. Viet Nam is therefore in need of assistance and is willing to work closely with the international community in our common struggle.

From the experience of our drug prevention and control activities, we have drawn the following lessons:

First, we need to raise the awareness of all people, from the various levels of leadership to each and every

citizen, of drug-related dangers so as to forge a shared determination to control and combat them.

Secondly, we need to strengthen the preventive approach, bringing into full play people's self-awareness and mobilizing them as participants in drug prevention and control efforts, in which the family plays an extremely important role.

Thirdly, we need to broaden cooperation with other countries, particularly neighbouring countries, in formulating an integrated and comprehensive plan for this struggle.

In our desire to contribute to the success of our common struggle against the drug menace, we wish to recommend the following:

First, the United Nations should enhance its role in implementing international drug control programmes in various regions and subregions and increase the exchange of information and experiences among nations, with priority given to groups of countries with similar characteristics.

Secondly, international financial institutions such as the World Bank and regional banks should design integrated projects and programmes aimed at assisting countries, especially the less developed countries, by addressing comprehensively the issues of drug and AIDS/HIV prevention and control and poverty alleviation.

The Vietnamese Government fully endorses the draft Political Declaration before the special session. We believe that the most challenging task ahead of us is to turn the resolve expressed at the session into concrete action. Viet Nam will do its utmost for the success of our common struggle against illicit drugs, for the future and happiness of the Vietnamese people and of the community of nations the world over.

The President: I thank the Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mostefa Benmansour, Minister of the Interior, Local Authorities and the Environment of Algeria.

Mr. Benmansour (Algeria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): First of all, I would like to convey my condolences to the delegation of Nigeria, a brotherly country, in connection with the death of Mr. Abacha. We sympathize deeply at this difficult time.

Ten years after the conclusion of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, the General Assembly has decided to convene this special session to combat drugs. That decision is aimed, without a doubt, at demonstrating the international community's commitment to undertake comprehensive and multifaceted action in order to deal with this scourge and its dangerous ramifications, which are indeed a potential threat to the economic and social equilibrium of most countries.

No country can feel safe from this devastating scourge, and no one can deny the danger of this phenomenon, which targets the very vital forces of a nation, particularly young people. It undermines our social structures and shakes the foundations of society. Eventually, it jeopardizes the economic development of States through the laundering of large amounts of money abroad which are shifted from the productive sectors.

Above and beyond the particular situation of individual States, it seems important to us that our common understanding of this phenomenon must include the economic and social circumstances within which the two aspects of the phenomenon develop, namely, drug demand and supply.

Algeria, which lies at the crossroads of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Middle East, and whose social values have protected it for a long time from being a producer or major consumer of drugs, has nonetheless found itself involved in the drug-trafficking phenomenon. This has been because of its geographical location, and because it has long land and sea borders. It is therefore a favourite transit route for large amounts of drugs, some of which is left behind and locally consumed.

Actually, according to our investigations, 75 per cent of the drugs that are seized are simply passing through our national territory. Local consumption and illicit drug-trafficking within Algeria still basically involve more natural drugs. However, an increasing use of psychotropic substances has been noted. What is still more serious is that recent investigations undertaken in the context of dismantling terrorist groups in Europe show that there is undeniably a link between the scourge of drugs and terrorist activities through transborder networks involved in arms- and drug-trafficking.

In fact, mainly because of the large immediate profits made available through it, terrorism uses drug-trafficking as a source for generously financing its criminal activities. Thus, Algeria calls once again for effective and organized international cooperation through monitoring of the cross-border movements of criminal gangs, exchanges of information between specialized agencies and the establishment of joint groups of experts.

Algeria would like to recall that because terrorism represents a global challenge to the international community as a whole, it cannot be tackled through selective approaches depending on where it happens or whom it targets.

Faced with the scourge of drugs, our public authorities have put into place and strengthened preventive, deterrent and suppressive measures. We have set up a national commission to combat drugs and drug abuse. We have also devised a national plan, which has been implemented with the participation of all of the competent bodies within our State as well as non-governmental organizations, and is coordinated by the national agency to combat drugs and drug abuse.

Prevention basically involves making the various sectors of society, particularly young people, more aware of the problem. In this respect we have had assistance from the media, which has made a significant contribution. As concerns deterrence, we are focusing on strengthening border monitoring through the allocation of additional human and material resources. These large-scale efforts would benefit from being supported and expanded by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

Furthermore, laws on safeguarding and promoting health, as well as certain provisions of the penal code and of the laws governing customs, the postal service and telecommunications, provide severe penalties for drug traffickers. In an effort to adapt, the Ministry of Justice is attempting a significant reform of legislation on illicit drug-trafficking to bring it into conformity with the international conventions to which Algeria is party.

We in Algeria are fully aware that national efforts alone, however determined, cannot halt this scourge, which knows no borders. That is why Algeria, along with some of its neighbours and the countries north of the Mediterranean, has set up, in the framework of bilateral agreements, mechanisms for cooperation, harmonization and exchange of information, with a view to preventing drug smuggling and trafficking.

The General Assembly's intention, by taking up this issue once again at a very high level, is not simply to reiterate — albeit with greater conviction and greater resolve — a profession of faith that is already known to the international community, which is being sorely tested by the spread of this scourge.

This special session was convened because of the increased awareness of the vast scope of the scourge of drugs and its devastating effects. In this area — as in so many others — effective international cooperation must be based on three key elements: the political will of States, a global approach to the problem, and the allocation of adequate resources to deal with its underlying causes.

The statements we have heard at this special session bear witness to the existence of that political will and reflect the need for a global approach to this scourge. We must now act together resolutely on the basis of a genuine Plan of Action that is based on shared responsibility and whose goal is coordinated action in a spirit of solidarity. We must therefore identify specific and concrete measures to wipe out this scourge, which poses a real threat to the well-being, stability and security of our countries.

Algeria would like to reaffirm here its determination to contribute to sparing present and future generations the scourges and transborder threats that jeopardize the security of peoples and the values of human civilization.

The President: I thank the Minister of the Interior, Local Communities and the Environment of Algeria for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Marsden Madoka, Minister of State of Kenya.

Mr. Madoka (Kenya): On behalf of the Kenya delegation, I wish to express gratitude to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for organizing this timely and crucial conference to critically review our efforts in countering the escalating international drug problem. Indeed, drug-trafficking and abuse have become a global problem with far-reaching destructive consequences in all spheres of life.

The drug situation in Kenya is not different from that of other countries. Unfortunately, Kenya has become a transit point for drugs such as heroin, originating from the Asian subcontinent and destined for Europe and America. In addition, cocaine, methaqualone and cannabis resin, commonly known as hashish, also transit through Kenya to various destinations in the world. The situation is aggravated by Kenya's strategic geographical location in relation to drug-source countries and its effective communications network. Cannabis sativa is widely grown in Kenya, and it is the most commonly abused drug in the country. The eradication of cannabis sativa has posed a great challenge to Kenya, which the Government is taking very seriously.

Our presence here demonstrates our commitment to review the policies and strategies towards effective control of drug-trafficking and abuse in the world. In this connection, my delegation supports the African common position on drug control, which was formulated by African experts during a meeting organized by the Organization of African Unity in Nairobi, Kenya, in March 1998.

At the national level, we have, *inter alia*, taken the following measures to address drug-related problems.

First, we established an anti-narcotics unit; secondly, we set up a permanent inter-ministerial drug coordinating committee to harmonize, monitor and evaluate all drug-control measures in the country; and thirdly, in 1997 we created a National Crime Research Centre.

We have further enacted the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Control Act of 1994, which incorporates various provisions of the United Nations Conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. We have also ratified the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances. We are currently working towards the ratification of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

At the subregional level, the East African States of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are working closely in the area of drug control. As a result of this cooperation, there have been more arrests and seizures of drugs by States of the subregion. The member countries have also drawn up a protocol on combating drug-trafficking within the region, which is expected to be signed some time this year. In addition, Kenya hosts both the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) Telecommunications Station for 19 countries of eastern and southern Africa and a subregional bureau for 10 countries of eastern Africa.

Experience has proved that no single country can successfully control the drug menace within its boundaries. That is why we are gathered here to review our cooperation and efforts in the drug battle. No doubt, the international community has made some progress in combating the drug problem. However, much remains to be done. In this respect, it is important to ensure the provision of sufficient resources for drug law enforcement and demand-reduction activities. Further, my delegation would propose that INTERPOL become more operational in order to coordinate action against international drug syndicates and ensure that fugitives do not enjoy any measure of protection or immunity from prosecution in any corner of the world.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the need for closer cooperation in the coordination of supply suppression and demand-reduction efforts at the subregional, regional and international levels. It is only through this cooperation that the international community will succeed in eradicating the drug problem from the world.

The President: I thank the Minister of State of Kenya for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oleg Bozhelko, Attorney-General of Belarus.

Mr. Bozhelko (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus allow me, first of all, to congratulate you, Sir — the representative of friendly neighbouring Ukraine, a country with which Belarus closely cooperates in all areas, including in the fight against narcotic drugs — on assuming the presidency of the General Assembly at this special session. We are confident that, under your able guidance, the session will be successful and effective.

The convening of such a high-level forum on the world drug problem is a striking manifestation of the deep concern of the international community over the growing scale, sophistication and social dangers of the illegal drug trade. This phenomenon, along with international organized crime and terrorism, has been correctly identified as a new transnational threat to global peace and security. It is heartening to note that the urgency and relevance of this problem is recognized by all countries represented here in this Hall.

Belarus fully supports the constructive and global approach of the United Nations towards the campaign against illegal drug manufacturing and trafficking as one of the priority activities of the Organization for the coming years.

The negative repercussions of narco-trafficking have not spared Belarus, located at the geographical centre of Europe. The favourable location of our country makes it a crossroads of the illegal drug trade. Every year, the law enforcement authorities of Belarus prevent scores of attempts to transport narcotic and psychotropic substances illicitly through the country and deter thousands of crimes linked to illegal drug-trafficking. Some local criminal groups are involved in international narco-trafficking. The import into the Republic and attempted distribution of large quantities of opium, heroin and other potent narcotic drugs has emerged as a dangerous trend.

The social dangers of drug abuse are also increasing. About 4,000 drug addicts are registered in our country of 10 million people. In the past five years, the number of crimes committed by drug addicts and intoxicated persons has increased tenfold. Along with the devastating consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and related ecological problems, drug abuse has become a real threat to our population's health, damaging the gene pool and jeopardizing the future of the nation.

Reiterating its commitment to meeting its international obligations, Belarus is making significant efforts to stop illicit drug-trafficking. Pursuant to a presidential decree, the Inter-Agency Commission on the Prevention of Crime and Drug Abuse was established in our country. A State Policy on Controlling Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Preventing Drug Abuse has also been adopted. A Programme of Comprehensive Measures to Counteract Illicit Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking has been approved for a three-year period.

Belarusian national legislation is being harmonized with the norms and principles of international law. Strict procedures for legal drug circulation have been formulated. Accountability for offences linked to illicit drug-trafficking and the involvement of minors in drug-related crimes has been significantly increased. The grounds and procedures for the medical treatment and social rehabilitation of drug abusers are regulated by law. The classification of drugs and psychotropic substances is being adapted to international norm and standards.

Furthermore, a series of organizational measures is being implemented. State control over the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and use of plants, substances and medicines enumerated in the lists and tables of international conventions has been strengthened. Scientific research in the area of substance abuse treatment has been expanded and a drug rehabilitation service is being developed with specialized divisions working with teenagers and youth. The treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts is being improved.

No less attention is being given to preventing the illicit consumption of narcotic drugs. To that end, experts are being trained to determine the groups vulnerable to drug abuse and to take corresponding preventive measures. A mass media campaign has been launched to explain the dangers of drug abuse.

Convinced that only joint efforts can counter the narcotic danger, Belarus is constantly expanding its multilateral and bilateral interaction with agencies of the United Nations system, other international organizations and countries in the field of drug control. At the intergovernmental and inter-ministerial levels, Belarus has concluded and is implementing anti-crime and anti-drug-trafficking agreements with neighbouring States and a number of countries of Western Europe and the Middle East. Joint operations to suppress drug smuggling are being successfully carried out in cooperation with the law enforcement authorities of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and other neighbouring States.

Belarus is a party to all major international conventions on drug control. We urge all States that have not yet become parties to these conventions to accede to and fully implement them.

Our country greatly appreciates the activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme as an independent international agency for coordinating national efforts and international cooperation in the fight against narcotic drugs. We support proposals to strengthen the United Nations capacity in this sphere.

The delegation of Belarus supports the draft final documents, prepared by common effort, to be adopted at this special session, as well as commitments and schedules specified therein. Belarus intends to incorporate many provisions of these documents into its national drug control programmes and to use them to improve its national legislation. At the same time, we believe that

national efforts should be enhanced through active international assistance. The delegation of Belarus is confident that the decisions of this special session will give new impetus to our common efforts to eradicate the plague of narcotics.

The President: I thank the Attorney-General of Belarus for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Chapson Butale, Minister of Health of Botswana.

Mr. Butale (Botswana): The illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related international crime is one the worldwide scourges of our time. It recognizes no national boundaries. No one country is big enough to tackle it alone. It is not amenable to the solutions which have been employed so far, except in a very few special cases.

It is therefore absolutely necessary to cut the umbilical cord linking production patterns in the countries in which the crops are grown and consumption habits in the countries in which there is demand for the end-products of these crops. It is for this reason that my delegation considers this special session to be opportune. It is my ardent hope that we shall, at the end of this session, come up with a new vision and approaches which could address squarely this international scourge that threatens the very fabric of our societies and the security of our countries.

My delegation fully supports the need for a comprehensive, multilateral and multisectoral approach which takes into account the many social and economic implications of drug production, trafficking and abuse. We also share the view that the strategies that emerge from this session should attach importance to the active participation and involvement of the general public in order to ensure broad-based support for national drug control activities.

Botswana has put in place mechanisms at the national level which will enhance its capacity to join the international community in the fight against illicit drug-trafficking and abuse by promoting the implementation of drug control treaties against drug-trafficking and related activities; by supporting resolution S-17/2, which was adopted at the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly; and by implementing some of the activities set out by the Global Programme of Action.

Botswana has acceded to the following United Nations conventions against drug abuse and illicit trafficking: the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

Botswana is determined to stop the use of its territory as a conduit for drugs destined for international markets and to deprive those who are engaged in illicit drug-trafficking of the proceeds of their criminal activities. To this end, the introduction and implementation of the Drugs and Related Substances Act of 1992 aims at preventing, suppressing and eventually eliminating the illicit production, sale, demand, trafficking, supply and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Act provides for forfeiture to the State of property and proceeds from, used in or intended for use in illicit drug-trafficking. This Act will be reviewed in the not too distant future to strengthen the existing control of precursors.

The Ministry of Health, through the Drugs Regulatory Unit, prevents the diversion of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and specific chemical substances from legitimate purposes by maintaining a permit system for importation and distribution.

Some work still needs to be done to establish a national committee to monitor the implementation of the activities stemming from the Global Programme of Action and to foster community participation. Meanwhile, crime prevention and drug abuse seminars are being held in communities and schools to contribute towards the reduction of demand for illicit drugs.

In order to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation, the following activities have been undertaken.

First, there is the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act Number 20 of 1990 on providing and obtaining international assistance on criminal matters, including drug-trafficking.

Secondly, there is the Extradition Act Number 18 of 1990 providing for the extradition of persons accused or convicted of crimes committed within the jurisdiction of other countries.

Thirdly, the States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Botswana is

a member, have signed a Protocol on combating illicit drug-trafficking within the region. The Protocol calls on member States to cooperate on strengthening legislation; mutual assistance; law enforcement; combating corruption and money-laundering; facilitating demand-reduction, treatment and rehabilitation; eradication of illicit crops; and promotion of arable farming, training and research.

Fourthly, regional police services currently cooperate in mounting joint operations in order to suppress illicit transboundary drug-trafficking.

Money-laundering is dealt with under the Proceeds of Serious Crime Act Number 19 of 1990. This Act deprives persons convicted of serious crimes, including drug-trafficking, of the benefits or rewards gained from such crimes.

The Corruption and Economic Crime Act Number 13 of 1994 provides for the establishment of a Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime, makes comprehensive provisions for the prevention of corruption and confers power on the Directorate to investigate suspected cases of corruption and economic crime.

The Directorate has intensified its efforts to fight any manifestations of corruption in the country, including drug-trafficking and money-laundering. It has had an impressive success rate in combating corruption and economic crime within the country, and our in-built capacity places the country in a comparatively strong position to fight corruption related to drug-trafficking and drug abuse.

Botswana appreciates the support accorded to it and to the member States of the SADC by the international community, and appeals for continued support in order to realize the objectives of the SADC Protocol against drug-trafficking and the SADC regional drug control programme of work for the years 1998-2002, which contains the following components: first, regional capacity-building and coordination; secondly, national capacity-building and coordination; thirdly, legal development; fourthly, supply reduction; fifthly, demand-reduction; and sixthly, illicit drugs and HIV/AIDS.

To recap, Botswana welcomes the convening of this special session. It will no doubt further refine our capacity, at both the national and international levels, to effectively wage the war against the illicit production, sale, demand, trafficking, supply and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. I can assure the Assembly that our commitment and resolve for the implementation of these activities of the Global Programme of Action are second to none.

The President: I thank the Minister of Health of Botswana for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mihály Kökény, Minister of Welfare of Hungary and Co-Chairman of the Hungarian Intergovernmental Committee against Drugs.

Mr. Kökény (Hungary): My congratulations go to all those whose tireless efforts made it possible to successfully prepare and convene this special session of the General Assembly, thus giving new impetus to the struggle against the world drug problem.

I would also like to associate myself with the statement of the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, who spoke on behalf of the European Union and its associated States.

Fighting the scourge of narcotic drugs is a most challenging agenda for us all. Individuals and societies in our contemporary world are affected by illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse of a magnitude never experienced before. Drugs constitute a threat everywhere: in poor and rich countries, in big cities and small villages, among teenagers and adults. They reach socially marginalized communities as well as successful individuals, and they undermine democratic institutions. As regards the region in which Hungary is situated, during recent years we have witnessed a continuous change in the illicit trafficking lines of the so-called Balkan route, observed the increasingly sophisticated way in which the drug traffickers' distribution network has been operating and watched the emergence and development of new synthetic drugs, representing a growing danger to young people.

During the First World War, French Prime Minister Clémenceau said that war was much too important to be left to the military. If I could apply this message to the war we are currently waging against drugs, I would say that medical knowledge and courage are not enough to fight the drug phenomenon successfully. What is needed is a broad alliance of all sectors of society, a well organized, integrated and coherent national policy and large-scale international cooperation.

Hungary, having acceded to all United Nations drug-related conventions, has harmonized its national

legislation with the provisions of these international instruments. It cooperates closely with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the International Narcotics Control Board. We join all those who call upon Member States which have not yet done so to ratify or accede to and fully implement these conventions. Hungary is against any attempts to liberalize access to soft drugs or heroin distribution techniques, and it continues to oppose the legalization of any illegal drugs. Such practices would not only contradict the spirit of the United Nations conventions but could have an adverse effect on the anti-drug educational activities aimed at young people.

Measures taken in Hungary to strengthen the capacity of national drug-related law enforcement agencies have already brought progress. Seizures of heroin, cannabis and synthetic drugs have significantly increased. Efforts to strengthen cooperation among judicial, police and customs authorities continue, thus narrowing the possibilities of illegal production, trafficking and money-laundering.

More attention is being paid to demand-reduction activities. Serious efforts are being made to raise awareness among the public, and in particular the younger generation, as to the dangers associated with drugs and to encourage and promote juvenile behaviour conducive to a drug-free way of life. In spite of all these measures, consumption continues to increase, especially in soft and synthetic drugs. The very tragic consequence is that 47 people died last year in Hungary as a result of drug abuse.

After a thorough overview of the drug-related situation in Hungary, a Drug Coordination Committee has been established within the Prime Minister's Office. Through the efficient operation of this high-level governmental structure, we expect to improve inter-agency coordination and promote the complex and effective implementation of a national strategy against drug abuse. Its starting point is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach which pays attention in a balanced way to both demand and supply reduction. My country strongly believes, in line with the activities of the Pompidou Group and the recent Mexican initiative in connection with the upcoming fifth International Conference on Health Promotion, that only a holistic public health vision and comprehensive actions to reduce the consumption of all addictive substantives can be successful in combating the drug menace.

Hungary appreciates the activities of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the outstanding role it has played as a global forum for international cooperation. Hungary's anti-drug policy has indeed benefited from the professional, judicial and technical assistance provided by UNDCP. We also remain committed to continuing our participation in its jointly elaborated subregional cooperation programme. We welcome the initiative of UNDCP on the eradication of or significant reduction in illicit crops. This endeavour can be effective if complemented by a complex global approach, including an alternative development programme. We highly value the first steps taken in implementing the Secretary-General's reform measures to improve the current structure and functioning of the United Nations bodies with responsibility for drug control.

Since the previous special session of the General Assembly on drugs took place in 1990, a great deal of work has been done. But the international community has yet to recognize that a stronger commitment and more outcome-oriented actions are needed if we want to get closer to the target of a drug-free world. The Political Declaration and the other documents to be adopted at the special session can be highly instrumental in attaining this objective. Hungary, for its part, will spare no effort in working towards this end.

The President: I thank the Minister of Welfare of Hungary and Co-Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee against Drugs for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Soubanh Srithirath, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Chairman of the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision.

Mr. Srithirath (Lao People's Democratic Republic): Today, we join each other, hand in hand, at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, to examine the world drug problem and to consider undertaking more resolute action to tackle this menace in a spirit of shared responsibility, mutual trust and cooperation, taking fully into account the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, as well as the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

The drug problem continues to be a matter of major concern to the international community. It affects all sectors of society in all countries, and in particular it undermines the health, development and well-being of young people, the most valuable asset of a nation.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic, a producing and transit country, is well known for being a part of the notorious Golden Triangle area. However, it is important to point out that the evolution of the drug problem in our country differs slightly from that in others. Opium production is carried out on a small scale and has been a way of life for some ethnic groups for centuries. According to the previous opium surveys, most growers are highland Lao who live in remote mountainous areas with little or no access to markets or health and education services. For the most part, they are induced by location and economic necessity to grow opium in order to sustain food security and earn a scanty family income.

With regard to drug-trafficking in Laos, it appears that the outlawed activities have taken place on a relatively small scale. The pattern of larger-scale trafficking seems rather dispersed, and it is assumed that a number of different trafficking routes are used. Although heroin addiction does not apparently represent any imminent threat to society, the infiltration of heroin or amphetamines has gained considerable ground in the country due to the fact that Laos is often used as a transit route and is an easy place for the import and export of laboratory and other materials for production.

In view of this alarming situation, which could undermine the well-being of its people, the Lao Government has undertaken swift measures to cope with the problem that is arising. Despite a lack of financial support, equipment and experience, our law enforcement officers have done their best to carry out their duties. As a result, a number of drug refineries have been dismantled and several national and international illicit drug producers and traffickers have been arrested. In some cases, our success derived from good cooperation with law enforcement officers of neighbouring countries.

Convinced that the implementation of alternative development projects is the principal means to reduce opium production, thereby offering economically, socially and ecologically viable alternatives to poppy cultivation, in the early 1990s the Lao Government decided to take radical steps to develop and implement a comprehensive drug control policy. For this purpose, a National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision and a Counter-narcotics Office were created. In 1994, a national drug control plan, known as the master plan, was also approved. In the light of new challenges, the Lao Government is currently revising the master plan. It primarily covers four sectors: institution-building, demand and supply reduction, the prohibition of illicit trafficking and related crimes. In February this year, in collaboration with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), we took another important step in this direction by launching a new national opium production and consumption survey in the 11 northern provinces of the Lao People's Democratic Republic as a follow-up to the 1992 and 1996 surveys. This undertaking will clearly provide a strong basis for future planning and monitoring of drug-related projects. As a matter of fact, the total opium production output in 1997 stood roughly at 126 tons, which is less than the 1996 figure of 140 tons.

In this connection, I would like to express our support for the innovative strategy proposed by the UNDCP for addressing the problem of illicit cultivation of opium poppy and coca bush during the next 10 years. For its part, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has outlined its own national strategy, which will be translated into provincial programmes, basic guidelines for the implementation of alternative development and demand-reduction projects as well as micro-projects. This national strategy, drafted with the collaboration of UNDCP, will be carried out over a period of 10 years, from 1998 to 2008. The financial requirements for its implementation are calculated at $81 million. Given the economic downturn in the region and our own financial constraints, most of these projects cannot be implemented without some assistance from international donors. We hope that the international community and organizations will give due consideration to this appeal.

In the field of law enforcement, our revised penal code provides for much severer penalties for drug-trafficking — life imprisonment — and the general principle of the prohibition of opium production. The Counter-narcotics Office is the leading and coordinating drug law enforcement agency. Four provincial units of this kind are already in place and six are expected to be established by the end of 1999. Other legal provisions, for chemical precursors and money-laundering, are to be introduced in the near future.

In the field of international cooperation, we have made considerable efforts in the recent period, by ratifying the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. In the same vein, the Lao Government plans to ratify the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in the near future. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a signatory of the South-East Asia memorandum of understanding, along with Cambodia, the People's

Republic of China, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and the UNDCP. The Lao Government has also signed a bilateral agreement on cooperation against illicit drug-trafficking with the Governments of Myanmar, Cuba and the Philippines. In March this year, we took part, for the first time as a full member, in the session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The fight against drug abuse requires strong and effective cooperation among us all: bilateral, subregional, regional and multilateral. We are very pleased to note that the draft political declaration and the draft action plans to be adopted by the Assembly reaffirm the unwavering determination and commitment of the international community to overcome the world drug problem, and more important, that they establish target dates. As a producing and transit country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic will continue to work closely with the UNDCP and all friendly countries in order to attain these goals as outlined. In this spirit, I wish the present special session a brilliant success.

The President: I thank the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Mohamad Tajol Rosli Mohamad Ghazali, Deputy Minister, Minister for Home Affairs of Malaysia.

Mr. Tajol Rosli (Malaysia): Undoubtedly, all the Governments represented at this special session recognize the severity and magnitude of the drug problem. Given its far-reaching implications, Malaysia continues to consider the drug problem as a major threat to its national security. Hence, we are committed to combating it not only within our borders but also internationally. We will join other countries in redoubling our efforts and continuing the international dialogue. We will continue to enforce stringent anti-drug laws. We are taking serious steps on prevention and rehabilitation.

Efforts to stamp out the drug scourge through supply reduction should be enhanced and continued. However, it is equally crucial to curtail demand. There has to be a balanced approach in order for all the national, regional and international efforts to succeed. We are very pleased that consensus has emerged at this special session on the need to intensify efforts also to address the demand problem. The adoption by the Assembly of the draft declaration on the guiding principles of demand-reduction will be an important milestone in the international effort. To this we lend our full support.

Malaysia has given very serious consideration to the preventive aspects of drug control. We know that prevention is expensive. Often, it takes a long time to achieve results. The Malaysian Government gives the highest priority to preventive drug education in its national strategy for combating the drug menace. Preventive programmes need to begin early, starting at the pre-school level, and to be implemented gradually at all levels of primary, secondary and tertiary education. We believe that effective drug education should be cumulative and comprehensive.

The Malaysian Government has embarked on the process of developing further our vision to create a drug-free nation by the year 2023, involving a time-frame of 25 years. Programmes and strategies are being developed, including a comprehensive demand-reduction programme starting with the smallest unit of the family, moving on to schools, work places, village communities, the various districts and states, and, finally, to the nation as a whole. By the year 2023, we envisage the emergence of a whole drug-free generation nationwide. Admittedly, this is an ambitious vision. However, we are convinced that it is achievable, and we are determined to achieve it.

At the regional level, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) member States have the vision of a South-East Asia free of the production, processing, trafficking and use of illicit drugs. This is part of the ASEAN Vision 2020 adopted by ASEAN heads of State and Government at the second ASEAN informal summit in Kuala Lumpur in December 1997. ASEAN ministers are expected to adopt a joint declaration for a drug-free ASEAN at the thirty-first ASEAN ministerial meeting in July 1998 that will stress ASEAN's resolve and determination to fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking in the next century.

Malaysia reaffirms its fullest support for mutual legal assistance among States in the fight against trafficking in illicit narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. There are currently adequate legal provisions in place within the criminal justice system in Malaysia to deal with matters relating to extradition and criminal proceedings, much in line with the 1988 United Nations Convention. There is a greater scope and a higher level of cooperation with Member States at the regional level. There are currently a number of forums, such as the Association of National Police Forces in ASEAN, which provide the platform for us to share experiences and develop cooperation.

The treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and drug-dependent persons are important components, together with law enforcement, in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. In Malaysia, we are willing to try all known methods of treatment and rehabilitation, including detoxification, and to consider various alternatives in the rehabilitation process.

Those who gain from illicit drug-trafficking must know that Governments around the world will not allow them to enjoy easily their ill-gotten wealth. The Political Declaration on countering money-laundering being considered at this special session, together with article 5 of the 1988 United Nations Convention, "Confiscation", will serve as very powerful tools against those drug traffickers. Currently Malaysia has a law on forfeiture of assets obtained from the ill-gotten proceeds of drug-trafficking. In this regard, we are always ready to cooperate with other Governments to trace, freeze and confiscate the assets of drug traffickers within the framework of the respective legal systems.

Malaysia welcomes and fully supports the United Nations initiative to formulate an action plan against the manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and their precursors. Immediate steps must be taken to curb the production and prevent the widespread abuse of such substances. Malaysia has in fact made it a capital offence to traffic in amphetamine-type stimulants, through the recent passage of the amendments to the Dangerous Drugs Act by Parliament.

We join others in paying tribute to Mr. Pino Arlacchi for his active leadership of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). We feel strongly that UNDCP should have adequate resources. All Member States should contribute generously to UNDCP. It is also vital that the contributions not be tied to any conditions, political or otherwise. After all, we, the Member States, agreed to reorganize the United Nations drug structure and create UNDCP. We must let it function efficiently and effectively.

I wish to reiterate once again Malaysia's commitment to the international efforts to address all aspects of the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. We hope that the successful outcome of this special session will galvanize the collective will and resolve of all Governments to further exert the necessary efforts and provide the appropriate resources to meet the challenges facing us now and into the next century. There are tough choices to be made. But we all have the political and moral responsibility to make those choices and, if necessary, to undertake tougher measures.

The President: I thank the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Maratkali Nukenov, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on National Security of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Nukenov (Kazakhstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): This session of the General Assembly is taking place against the background of a drug addiction problem that is becoming more acute in all regions of the world without exception. Illegal drug-trafficking, one of the most dangerous manifestations of organized crime, has long constituted a threat not only to the health, lives and dignity of millions of people, but also to the political stability of States and to global security. In this connection, Kazakhstan regards countering illegal drug use and trafficking as one of the most important and useful activities of the United Nations.

The drug problem cannot be called a new one for the Central Asian countries. It has existed in the region for a long time, facilitated by the accessibility of raw materials for drug production. For example, hemp grows wild in the Shu valley and the *ephedra sinica* and poppies grow in the mountain regions of Tien Shan and Pamir. In recent years, however, this problem has become considerably more acute, and our States have not been in a position to react to it adequately.

It has to be noted with regret that the scale of drug abuse and illegal trafficking in Kazakhstan is expanding from year to year. This circumstance is the result of a set of interrelated factors, such as the inadequacy of legislation, the fact that legislation has lagged behind the requirements of new social and political realities, and the insufficiency of State resources for curbing the growing scale of drug abuse and the activities of drug dealers. It is well known that this situation is characteristic of all countries with transitional economies.

The special features of Kazakhstan's geographical location have led international drug dealers to take particular interest in our country. They are now working with local drug dealers. For example, the smuggling of drugs from South-West Asia through Central Asia to the Western European countries and the United States has considerably increased in recent years. Last year, the

volume of smuggled drugs seized in Kazakhstan was almost double the total for the previous six years.

Kazakhstan is fully aware of the serious consequences of the problems of drug abuse and drug-trafficking and has raised the fight against these evils to the level of a high-priority task for the State. Thus, our President, Nursultan Nazarbaev, has prepared a strategy for the development of the country up to the year 2030 that includes the priority of creating a healthy lifestyle for our people, *inter alia* by stepping up the fight against drug addiction. It is only because of an extremely important matter — namely, the inauguration of the new capital of Kazakhstan, Astana — that our President is unable to take part himself in the work of this special session of the Assembly.

The fight against drugs in Kazakhstan is being conducted through special government programmes drawn up in accordance with the basic United Nations conventions on the control of drugs and precursors. We are seeking to strengthen the national law enforcement agencies and to stress interdepartmental coordination of the work of State institutions in this field.

Acknowledging the need to join forces in the face of a common danger, the countries of Central Asia and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) signed in May 1996 in Tashkent a memorandum of understanding and cooperation in the field of drug control and adopted a joint programme of action. An important phase in the implementation of the programme of action was the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Central Asia in January of 1998 at Almaty, at which a serious assessment was made of the emerging drug situation in the region and specific steps to change it. Issues relating to the implementation of these steps will be the focus of attention at the region's first international conference on drug problems, to be held in Kazakhstan in October.

The problem of the illegal distribution of drugs was also a focus of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) summit conference that took place in May 1998 in Almaty. It adopted joint documents calling on the ECO member States to cooperate in combating the smuggling of narcotics and psychotropic substances.

Kazakhstan, like other Central Asian countries, is increasingly becoming hostage to international producers of illegal drugs. In this connection, we believe that it is necessary to draw the international community's special attention to the Central Asian region.

The Government of Kazakhstan is seeking to expand cooperation with international organizations, especially the United Nations. We are interested in projects aimed at solving the problem posed by the drug crops region, in particular by using effective and environmentally sound means of eradicating them. The urgency of such projects lies in the fact that Kazakhstan has one of the largest raw material bases in the world for drug production: The total area where cannabis, *ephedra* and poppies grow is approximately 1.2 million hectares. In addition, about 850,000 hectares not used for agricultural production are suitable for the cultivation of opium poppies.

Kazakhstan fully supports the new initiatives of UNDCP in the Central Asian region. Among them, we welcome plans to create a security zone around Afghanistan and to reinforce the national borders.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the President and Government of Kazakhstan, to express gratitude to the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and Executive Director of UNDCP, Mr. Pino Arlacchi, both for his fruitful visit to our country in January 1998 and for sending United Nations experts to study the drug situation in Kazakhstan and to render practical assistance in drawing up a long-term master plan and in its subsequent implementation.

The Government of Kazakhstan, a country that has a developed pharmaceutical and chemical industry, will cooperate in every possible way with UNDCP in instituting appropriate controls over trade in medicines and precursors in Central Asia and beyond.

Action to solve the world drug problem must be conducted jointly and requires shared responsibility. The main issue, perhaps, remains the problem of reducing demand for drugs. States need to work more intensively and seriously with families and educational institutions and to organize extracurricular activities for children and youth that will, from earliest childhood, instil in the rising generation an immunity to the temptation of drugs and an unwavering rejection of them, encouraging a healthy lifestyle in the society.

The problems posed by the illegal cultivation of drug crops, the laundering of drug money, the distribution of amphetamine-type stimulants and the diversion of precursors into illegal trafficking, along with the prospects for alternative crop development, must be resolved at the international level.

It is precisely for this reason, in our view, that the adoption of the final documents of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly defining the strategy for overcoming the worldwide drug problem cannot but make a valuable contribution to the elimination of this global problem that threatens mankind and to increasing the effectiveness of worldwide international cooperation.

The President: I thank the Deputy Chairman of the Committee on National Security of Kazakhstan for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yuri Ushakov, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Ushakov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The problem of drug abuse has probably existed as long as mankind. On the eve of the third millennium, however, it has become a global challenge that can be met only by the coordinated and effective efforts of the entire international community.

Today, not only do narcotic drugs ruin the health of millions of people, but at times the growing drug threat shakes the very foundations of society and government. Drugs are associated with petty and serious crime and know no borders, penetrating everywhere and destabilizing entire regions.

Are the international community's efforts sufficient to meet this challenge? What must be done to ensure the effectiveness of international cooperation in this field? It is quite appropriate that the current special session be focused precisely on these issues. President Jacques Chirac's appeal for a crusade against the drug threat seems quite apt and we fully endorse it.

The success of the global efforts to combat drugs will depend primarily on the effectiveness of actions taken at the national level. We understand this well in Russia, where the drug problem has become increasingly acute in recent years.

About two million people abuse drugs in our country. The annual snowballing growth in the number of drug addicts is of particular concern. Whereas, in the early 1990s, the growth was 10 to 15 per cent, last year it had risen to 60 per cent. The number of underground drug dealers is on the rise, and the smuggling of drugs from abroad is growing rapidly. Russia is located at the crossroads of major transit routes between drug producers and consumers. Thus the drugs hit us first, relieving the pressure of the drug trade on other States.

The Russian leadership is taking energetic social, institutional, medical and legal steps on the basis of a federal programme specifically designed for this purpose. In April, the law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which meets international standards, entered into force. The law enforcement agencies assigned to combat drug crime have been considerably strengthened. Centres for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts are being established. The anti-drug campaign has been dramatically intensified through the use of mass media and educational institutions and by reaching out to young people. All these activities are coordinated by a special government commission.

We are particularly concerned to build up a reliable anti-drug barrier within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) framework. We actively participated in the development of the inter-State programme of joint measures to combat organized crime and other dangerous offences in the territory of States parties to the year 2000, which was adopted by the Council of Heads of States of the Commonwealth in May 1996. This programme contains a special anti-drug section. In recent years, as a result of large-scale operations that CIS law enforcement agencies have jointly carried out, hundreds of drug dealers with international connections have been stymied.

Drug abuse has now attained the proportions of a worldwide epidemic and must be actively fought by the entire international community. No State should be passive or pretend that the drug problem is of no concern to it. Our experience with cooperative efforts between anti-drug agencies in Russia and in a number of countries in Latin America, South-East Asia and other regions of the world shows that, for such joint efforts, distance is no obstacle. It is necessary to combat both the illegal supply of drugs and the illegal demand for them.

We must recognize that emphasizing only law enforcement and punitive measures is not very effective. Social and medical factors are increasingly important in solving the drug problem. Indeed, we can hardly expect real, positive change in this area unless we create a general ambience in the world whereby drugs are rejected. Here it is hard to overestimate the role of the general public, the mass media and non-governmental organizations. The importance of the anti-drug campaign increases tremendously against this background of a

growing and alarming trend whereby there is a kind of "fashion" for drugs.

Russia is opposed to any attempt to legalize the non-medicinal use of drugs — be they the so-called soft or hard drugs — and we are against removing the issue of drug use from strict public supervision.

The current special session presents additional confirmation that the main role in coordinating multilateral cooperation for combating drugs belongs to the United Nations. We trust that the Political Declaration and the other documents to be adopted today will give a significant political impetus to further building up efforts in the most important areas. Curbing the spread of synthetic drugs, establishing control over trafficking and precursors, encouraging alternative development, strengthening interaction between law enforcement agencies, countering money-laundering — these are the areas where must concentrate our efforts first.

We believe that it is difficult to overestimate the importance of greater efficiency on the part of the United Nations drug control structures. The steps undertaken by the Secretary-General to make them more dynamic fully meet this goal, as does the evident willingness of the new leadership of the UNDCP to give a new momentum to its work, in particular through large-scale plans on global eradication of illicit drug crops.

Russia favours close interaction with the United Nations. One example of this was the April 1997 Moscow International Conference on Drug Control Cooperation, jointly organized by the Russian Government and UNDCP. Its decisions must be translated into practical deeds.

The world community has a sufficiently effective legal mechanism for drug control action. Here I refer to the three fundamental Conventions on drug control. What now has to be done is to complete the process ensuring universal participation in those instruments. From this rostrum we would once again call upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to these Conventions as soon as possible. That is the only way to deprive drug barons of their safe havens and to create a united anti-drug front.

Our session is being held under the slogan "A drug-free world: We can do it". Yes, we can, but a lot of painstaking work remains to be done. Russia is ready to do it. We will do our best to help rid humankind of the scourge of drugs by the twenty-first century.

The President: I thank the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Saleh Al-Shaikh, Assistant Deputy Minister for Rights Affairs, Ministry of the Interior of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al-Shaikh (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of my delegation, Sir, I wish to congratulate you, as previous speakers have done, on your election to preside over this session. I should like also to congratulate the members of the Bureau for the confidence placed in them. Finally, I should like to thank you for giving us an opportunity to speak, and I wish you every success in your work.

Mr. Zacharakis (Greece), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My Government shares the great concern of other countries as to the alarming proportions taken on by the illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances in recent years and their spread to all social strata, in particular our youth, who represent the wealth of our societies. That is why my Government is launching from this rostrum an urgent appeal to all peace- and security-loving countries so that those States that have not yet acceded to the international conventions to combat drugs will take measures to ensure that our efforts bear fruit.

We would like to see all States accede to international conventions and agreements to combat narcotics in order to safeguard our children, our youth and future generations so that they may live ethically and in dignity and thus be protected from the scourge of drugs, which destroy health as well as humankind as a whole.

Coordinated efforts on the part of all countries are today more than ever necessary in order to combat drugs, because the United Nations, through its various programmes, and in particular the programmes to combat narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, is continuing to deploy considerable efforts to combat this scourge. It is therefore incumbent upon us today to adopt measures to promote the implementation of agreements and conventions to combat narcotic drugs. In addition, we would like a study to be carried out to assess the obstacles remaining to the full implementation of international drug agreements and conventions, so that we can find solutions ensuring the application of these conventions, in particular in those countries where these

narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are cultivated or manufactured, as well in the countries that are used for the transit or smuggling of drugs.

Undoubtedly this effort will increase international cooperation and our efforts to combat the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of these drugs and psychotropic substances. It will also enable us to put an end to trafficking in the precursors and chemical products that contribute to the manufacturing of these drugs, and it will further strengthen measures aimed at putting an end to the trafficking in precursors and psychotropic substances.

We are also deeply concerned over the growth of money-laundering in certain regions of the world, driven by poverty and inadequate control mechanisms. Thus, the sources of this money remain hidden. We must also strengthen cooperation to eradicate illicit crops, promote the development of alternatives and encourage these countries to step up their efforts to eradicate drug crops and replace them with other, profitable plantings. This could be done with the assistance of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP).

Legal cooperation, the strengthening of legislation, and coordination within the United Nations system are, more than ever, necessary and important in our fight against drug-trafficking, organized crime and the terrorist groups that traffic illicitly in narcotics and weapons and commit other crimes that destabilize the security of States. These control measures should include the exchange of expertise and data on drug traffic, traffickers, transit and distribution points and criminal activities in this area.

My Government wishes to reaffirm that we are all responsible for fighting drugs. Cooperation between neighbours will significantly strengthen our anti-drug campaign. Moreover, my Government will never support proposals to legalize any drugs or their consumption. These proposals run counter to our religious teachings, international norms and practices, and the dignity and nature of mankind.

I wish to pay a tribute to the United Nations for the important work it has done through its anti-drug programme. We hope that the programme will be coordinated with those of other United Nations agencies.

In conclusion, I once again express my gratitude and hope that peace, security and prosperity will reign throughout the world. I wish the Assembly full success in its campaign to eradicate drugs and related crimes.

The Acting President: I thank the Assistant Deputy Minister for Rights Affairs, Ministry of the Interior of Saudi Arabia, for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Hachani, Chairman of the delegation of Tunisia.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): In recent years, the scope, globalization and serious implications of the drug problem, for individuals as well as for society, have become a challenge that the international community will have to meet in the future.

The formation of international cartels and the increase of networks for moving large quantities of drugs have made the struggle against this scourge ever more difficult. The vast profits earned by the international drug traffic, estimated in the billions of dollars a year, and their injection into the licit economy — in other words, the laundering of drug money — threaten every country, developed and developing alike. In this respect, need we recall the often devastating social impact of drug-trafficking and abuse, primarily on the family, the workplace and society, as well as their harmful effects on health? Drug abuse and trafficking also wreak economic damage, particularly in the areas of employment, prices, taxation, trade and finance.

Thus, we are facing a situation whose economic and social repercussions currently pose a global threat, particularly to many countries of the South, where inadequate regulation and control systems hamper the means of response. It is surprising to note that, despite growing international awareness of the gravity of the matter and the existence of a solid legal framework of drug control conventions, the international drug trade remains alarmingly widespread.

My country, Tunisia, like other countries committed to international cooperation in the fight against organized crime in all its forms, therefore welcomes the convening of this special session. It provides an unparalleled opportunity to Governments and the international community to reaffirm their will and determination to face the drug problem together by adopting a practical plan of action to eradicate this scourge. I wish here to congratulate all those who helped to prepare for this session, in particular the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Mr. Pino Arlacchi, and his colleagues.

Tunisia reiterates its appeal for multilateral cooperation to eliminate the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs, focused on the provisions of the Political Declaration which our Governments are ready to adopt. I wish in particular to recall the firm commitment of all States to meeting their obligations under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, and to implementing national legislation and strategies to that end.

In this respect, I would stress that Tunisia, which is neither a producing nor a consuming country but is aware that the struggle against this evil involves all countries, has signed the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the Arab and African protocols, treaties and action plans against the illicit traffic in these products. To that end, my country has adopted important legislation prioritizing prevention and suppressing crime. In this respect, I would cite the 1992 Tunisian law on narcotics which distinguishes between the trafficker and the consumer of these products and encourages rehabilitation. It also punishes the laundering of drug money and includes provisions specifically aimed at protecting children and youth from this evil.

In the same spirit, a 1996 document established and organized the National Narcotics Office, entrusted with studying and researching all issues related to narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors. This Office also participates in health education aimed at reducing drug addiction. It involves officials from various Ministries concerned with this question.

In order to prevent the diversion of these substances for other than medical purposes, we have adopted guidelines to regulate the dispensing of certain psychotropic substances in health clinics. In addition, measures have also been taken to help addicts and reintegrate them into society. In this spirit, and in order better to assist addicts, a national structure is to be established in a hospice setting within a thermal spa.

It should be understood that efforts made at the national level to rationalize the use of narcotics and psychotropic substances will remain inadequate if those of the international community are not undertaken in stricter cooperation.

We therefore feel that the globalization of the drug phenomenon and its implications for the international community require multilateral cooperation more than ever before. We believe that this must focus primarily on the following elements of the draft Declaration before this special session.

The first element is to recognize the collective and shared responsibility that exists in the area of combating all aspects of drug abuse.

The second element involves the sustained efforts of the wealthy countries and the United Nations system — in particular the multilateral financial organizations — to assist producer countries to carry out substitution and sustainable development programmes to eliminate one of the causes of the expansion in the cultivation of illicit crops. In addition, close cooperation and coordination among the various competent bodies of the United Nations is one of the best ways to combat the drug problem.

The third element is to strengthen multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation to combat criminal organizations involved in drug-related activities. In this connection, the Plan of Action adopted at its thirty-second session by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, which was held in Yaoundé in July 1996 is, in our view, the main instrument to coordinate and control activities to combat drugs in Africa. It therefore deserves the ongoing support of the UNDCP and other competent bodies of the United Nations system.

I am also pleased to recall the eminently positive role played by the Arab Interior Ministers' Council, in coordination with the actions of the countries of our subregion, to combat narcotic drugs.

The fourth element is massive support for the United Nations, in particular for the drug control bodies, as the indispensable Organization whose role is essential to our ongoing struggle against the abuse and illicit production of drugs and related criminal activities.

My country also hopes that the recommendations of this session will be translated into specific actions, the implementation of which is incumbent upon all States that want to eradicate this scourge in the course of the first decade of the next millennium.

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Tunisia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nasser Bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Chairman of the delegation of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I wish to congratulate the President on his election to lead this important session and his meritorious efforts to make it a success. I am confident of his wisdom and good guidance in this session. I also cannot fail to express my thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to Mr. Pino Arlacchi, Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and Chairman of the preparatory body, for this special session. I thank them all for the excellent work they have done in order to crown this session with success.

All the States of the world are today confronted with the following facts. Drugs and their illicit traffic are a devastating threat to the international community and a menace to the very security and the economic, political and social stability of society. The problem of drugs and their illicit traffic has grown monstrously in recent years and has exploited the phenomenon of globalization — a demonstrable characteristic of our international relations — and the resultant free markets, open borders and advanced communications.

The global village is about to become a communal tomb for millions of human beings, both for those who abuse substances that destroy the mind and for the victims, be they families or individuals, who confront the criminal cartels that promote such substances. These cartels have acquired huge resources that far exceed those of many States represented in this body.

The problem of drugs and their illicit traffic is a menace which threatens all societies — rich and poor, advanced and less advanced. Combating it will require scientific planning and international cooperation based on the common responsibility of all States in this regard. All States must observe a code of conduct in connection with controlling drugs and confronting their traffic and the forces benefiting therefrom. We cannot impose a certain point of view that takes into account only the political and economic circumstances of some developing countries. Combating drugs and their illicit traffic is a common responsibility that requires cooperation among producing and consuming States alike. Without demand, there is no supply. The relationship is complex and mutually dependent and cannot be resolved unilaterally.

Combating narcotics will require intensive solidarity and cooperation among the developing and developed countries. This must be done through joint programmes, under the auspices of the United Nations, that deal with poverty in the many States where it has contributed to increasing the production of narcotics precursors. That has occurred through the involvement of naive farmers who unwittingly provide the raw materials for this miserable trade.

We call upon States to welcome and endorse without hesitation all the draft resolutions and recommendations before this session.

Our responsibility to future generations makes it imperative that we protect society's youth from this destructive menace, particularly as they are the source of future development. We in Qatar are fully aware of the importance of the common work being done to combat the scourge of narcotics and their illicit traffic. We have therefore taken the following steps at the national level.

The first step is to support and develop an anti-narcotics department by providing it with the requisite manpower, financial resources, advanced training through national and international workshops, and equipment necessary for narcotics control.

The second step is the formulation of scientific programmes to educate the young about the serious dangers of narcotics. This is done through the mass print and audio and visual media, by holding workshops and seminars, by publishing booklets and leaflets, and by presenting exhibits that illustrate the risks of drugs and the ways to protect oneself from them.

The third step is to make statistical and field surveys in order to assess abuse, trafficking and other factors contributing to the problem with a view to finding the solutions necessary to deal with it. The fourth is to help abusers themselves through rehabilitation.

At the regional and international levels, we have taken the following steps: full implementation of the Arab strategy for control of drugs and psychotropic substances and endorsing the Arab convention against illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances. Qatar is a party to the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 United Nations Convention.

The authorities in my country are keen to participate in international conferences and information exchange on drug control at both the regional and international levels. Furthermore, the State of Qatar strictly enforces laws against those involved in drug-trafficking, and sequesters their real property and seizes any money resulting from such illicit traffic. It has also adopted specific banking and administrative procedures to prevent money-laundering, and is currently working on a special law to further control and combat this practice.

In addition to the steps taken by the State in this respect, civil society also has a role to play. Civil institutions play a part in spreading information about the risks and dangers of drugs. We are also planning to establish a high-level national committee to unify national efforts to control and combat drugs and psychotropic substances.

The State of Qatar, out of its conviction that international cooperation to confront this serious problem is very important, proclaims its full support for the United Nations endeavours to eliminate illicit crops. It also supports the Political Declaration to be adopted at this special session and all the other documents relating to reduction of demand, including the Action Plan against amphetamines and the draft texts on judicial cooperation and combating money-laundering. These are all steps that will require strong, creative and cooperative international political will.

The Acting President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Qatar for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jassim Mohammed Buallay, Chairman of the delegation of Bahrain.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The phenomenon of drug addiction and production and illicit drug-trafficking is considered one of the most dangerous phenomena confronting our world today, and it must be given our full attention because of its devastating impact on the health of our young people and on the future of our societies. Drugs destroy societies, ruin lives, lead to crime, hinder economic and human development and threaten the health and well-being of mankind as a whole. The phenomenon of drug addiction and trade does not concern individual States alone; it is a world phenomenon which the international community should confront comprehensively, in order to uproot it. Its elimination is a shared responsibility which requires the implementation of an integrated programme. Such a programme should be in consonance with the objectives and purposes of the United Nations Charter and international law.

In this context, Bahrain is closely following the developments and achievements of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme as it seeks to coordinate the activity of the United Nations, implement international resolutions on this issue and develop a strategy to confront the phenomenon of the spread of drugs.

International criminal activities relating to illicit drug-trafficking are not only a threat to our societies, they also destabilize our institutions and violate the law. It is noteworthy that illicit drug operations have grown with advances in technological development, particularly in transport and communications. In addition, the liberalization of international trade has a great effect on the continuous increase of the drug problem, which has become a prosperous trade yielding enormous profits and great influence as a result of money-laundering. Therefore, States must make very effort to be creative in finding new ways of mutual cooperation and coordination in every relevant field to combat this scourge by, *inter alia*, developing more effective legal provisions and special measures to enable them to stop illicit trafficking. We must also strengthen air and sea border control, improve the policing of borders, and increase the effectiveness of customs, immigration and postal service personnel.

With regard to the illicit cultivation of drug crops, we stress the necessity of continuing the support of the United Nations funding for alternative crops, which has great importance in this area of activities. Furthermore, we welcome the proposal of Mr. Arlacchi, Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, to provide social services such as health, education and roads to producers in exchange for abandoning the production of drug crops in favour of other crops.

All of our States suffer from the scourge of drug addiction and illicit trafficking. This has led to negative consequences affecting society. Crime has reached unprecedented levels, violence has increased and the lives of individuals, families and societies have been destroyed, to say nothing of the haemorrhaging of financial and human resources that could otherwise have been dedicated to social and economic development. Bahrain believes in the importance of international

cooperation in order to confront this scourge. Therefore, States must make every effort at all levels in order to stop the production and trade in drugs, as well as their use. Programmes for demand-reduction should be an integral part of any national strategy. These programmes should also be integrated in order to further cooperation between all competent authorities so as to contain the tragic consequences of drug abuse, whether by individuals or communities. To this end, programmes must include all aspects of prevention, such as disseminating information, raising awareness and providing advice, treatment, and rehabilitation, so as to reintegrate, former drug addicts into society.

Bahrain, out of its commitment to averting the dangers of drugs, which negatively affect economic and social development, has fully devoted itself to combating this scourge so as to prevent its spread in our society, and in order to protect our human and economic resources. All of our national institutions have collaborated in this effort. The Ministries of Health, of the Interior, of Information, of Education, of Finance and of National Economy have cooperated in order to eliminate this phenomenon. In this context, a special unit within the psychiatric hospital has been designated as a central medical reference facility for the treatment of drug addicts. A decree has been issued by the Minister for Health which prohibits the treatment of these patients outside this facility in order to contain the scope of the problem and to better assess its dimensions.

At the international level, Bahrain has acceded to all international conventions against drug abuse, most recently the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. That is in addition to Arab cooperation within the framework of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers of the League of Arab States. Bahrain also participated in the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce the Demand for Drugs and to Combat the Cocaine Threat, held at London in 1990, which was followed by an agreement between Bahrain and the United Kingdom on the question of international drug smuggling.

The President returned to the Chair.

Such concerted efforts have contributed to a considerable curtailment of the drug problem, and it is our hope that we shall succeed in eliminating it once and for all. At the same time, we hope that international cooperation will grow more efficient and more effective in order to contain this scourge and eventually eliminate it completely: that is our goal. When we call for international cooperation, we hope that it will be highly effective, for the problems of drug abuse and drug-trafficking are growing worse. These problems, and their victims, now constitute a worldwide phenomenon that appears to have gone out of control, to the point where some people have lost all hope of containing it, let alone overcoming it. But with action there can be no despair, and we have no choice but to act. This scourge threatens our children and future generations, and it threatens our societies.

The President: I thank the chairman of the delegation of Bahrain for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gian Nicola Filippi Balestra, chairman of the delegation of San Marino.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): Today, we, the representatives of the Governments of the world, are gathered at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly to reaffirm our commitment to a drug-free world for the twenty-first century. The Republic of San Marino is firmly convinced that nothing can be achieved if we do not first commit our Governments and our peoples to that end.

It is time for us to stop asking who is to be blamed: supply and demand are two sides of the same coin. Drug abuse and trafficking run in a cycle. No country is left out. Developed and developing countries need to cooperate to break this cycle. It can be stopped at any point, for instance, by developing alternative crops, strictly monitoring the use of precursors, and working against money-laundering.

Drug abuse is tearing millions of men, women and children apart. Drug addiction also means isolation. Too much energy is devoted to destruction, or even to self-destruction. It is of the utmost importance to reverse this trend; otherwise the situation may dramatically deteriorate beyond repair.

It is appalling to acknowledge that the consumption of drugs involves an estimated 190 million drug users around the world. It is therefore essential to teach our young people to understand the full destructive power of drugs. We must focus on building a preventive culture able to counteract the fake attractiveness of drugs by involving all levels of society: schools, families and communities.

The problem of narcotic drugs spreading among youngsters is deeply felt by the Government of the Republic of San Marino, but searching for an answer to this problem is not an easy task. San Marino is a rather developed country with a diversified economy. Our high standard of living produces contrasting effects: on the one hand, it helps contain the number of heavy drug users; on the other hand, it seems to increase the consumption of other types of drugs, the so-called recreational drugs such as Ecstasy and Ice. These drugs are consumed mainly in discothèques and other recreational areas. We are particularly aware of the difficulty of fighting the alarming spread of these amphetamine-type stimulants. Such substances can be made in clandestine laboratories anywhere in the world, employing ready-to-use chemicals. The recipes for these dangerous and addictive drugs are easy to get, and the risk for producers is lower than it is for cocaine and heroin dealers.

It seems that one of the many causes of drug addiction among youngsters is the lack of values and ideals. Such values are present, but prove very fragile when they crash against real life. A forum such as the United Nations is the ideal place to strengthen these values, since here the concepts of peace, equality, respect for human rights and social justice are defended and promoted. This Organization therefore plays an essential role in fulfilling the expectations and ideals of young people.

In recent years, the United Nations has reached many goals in spite of numerous obstacles. We would like to mention the creation in 1991 of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), which represents the international response to this global plague. We are confident that the appointment of Mr. Pino Arlacchi as Executive Director of the UNDCP will bring new impetus to the fight against drugs. However, much more needs to be done.

With this in mind, in 1995 San Marino signed the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds From Crime. The illegal drug trade is a $400 billion business, mostly in cash. The Republic of San Marino deems cooperation among States in the criminal and judicial spheres to be one of the fastest ways to obtain positive results. It has been demonstrated several times that confiscating assets is more effective in the fight against drug cartels than confiscating drugs. This is one more reason to proceed in that direction at an accelerated pace.

A few years ago, San Marino also adopted an anti-money-laundering law, with the aim of monitoring cash transactions. Since 1991, we have been an active member of the Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs — the Pompidou Group — an expert body created within the framework of the Council of Europe to address drug-related topics. In 1998, we hosted an international seminar on drug consumption in recreational areas. International cooperation based on dialogue and on an exchange of experience remains the key in fighting drug abuse.

A special acknowledgement should go to Luxembourg. Luxembourg was in fact the first country to implement one of the provisions of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. That Convention encourages States parties to invest the money originating from illegal drug-trafficking in financing international organizations specializing in the fight against drugs. There is no better way for that money to be used. We hope that more countries will follow this honourable example.

In the case of drugs, the Republic of San Marino feels very much part of an integrated community. We must react collectively with common and vigorous action against this common threat, putting aside selfish and short-term interests. This is the time to show that we are able to defend ourselves and future generations from a common and powerful enemy. This is the time to effectively implement the solidarity and the determination that we all long for in our statements.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of San Marino for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Agim Nesho, Chairman of the delegation of Albania.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): We are gathered here in this body to counter the drug problem, which is an evil for every country and society, small or large, powerful or poor, and which seriously threatens our societies and civilizations. This special session of the General Assembly demonstrates once again that our battle against drugs cannot be faced alone, but needs responsibility, cooperation and assistance at the international level.

This is why Albania strongly supports the role of the United Nations, as a just and unique Organization for

taking leadership and for generating clear strategies and appropriate assistance on this important matter.

Albania wholeheartedly supports the documents that this session is about to adopt — the Political Declaration, the Declaration on demand-reduction and other measures — and firmly believes that they will create new momentum for the international community to fight drugs. Albania stands ready to do its part in this process and is fully committed to our common and ultimate goal: to have a drug-free world.

Albania is not the only country facing this big social problem. Its presence as a new phenomenon is related to the geography, location and level of political, economical and social development of the Albanian society. The considerable political and economic changes that took place in my country at the beginning of this decade as part of transforming our society into a new and democratic one — along with our lack of experience with and knowledge about this phenomenon, the absence of appropriate legislation to prevent it and the non-existence of the appropriate State structures and non-governmental organizations necessary to fight it — not only led to the existence of the drug phenomenon in our country, but also transformed it into a real threat to Albanian society, which it must deal with urgently.

After 1992 the drug phenomenon expanded greatly, especially with respect to the cultivation and use of the narcotic plant *cannabis sativa* and narcotics traffic into and out of the country. Since 1993 the traffic in hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine has increased considerably. A part of the overall quantity of traded drugs remains in the country to be distributed and sold. Currently Albania has about 2,000 to 3,000 users, most of them from 16 to 25 years old.

In order to confront the problem, the Albanian Government established an anti-drug committee which is responsible for developing a national strategy and coordinates efforts with the work of other governmental structures. At the same time, priority is being given to the creation and implementation of a modern legal framework in accordance with basic standards of international law.

The geographic position of Albania demands close cooperation with our neighbouring counties, mainly Italy and Greece, with which we are working at the bilateral level to better control the borders and coordinate joint actions against drug traffickers, money-laundering and criminal activities.

Recognizing that this is a new phenomenon for us, we are cooperating strongly with the international specialized bodies, and Albania is also involved in a number of international organizations, such as the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union Phare programme, the OKTAPUS joint programme of the European Council and the European Union, and so forth. Albania is attending the permanent conference of Interior Ministers, entitled "On the Balkan road of drugs", and is also involved with regional initiatives in the fight against organized crime within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organization, the South-Eastern Europe Cooperation Initiative, the Central European Initiative, and so forth.

In developing our strategy against drugs, Albania is of the view that we need to do more for young people, and especially to create a social environment that increases public awareness that drugs harm and kill people. We think that this has to be the main goal of Albanian civil society in the future.

Modern society is dealing today with the most delicate social problems in order to open the way for the development of our society and civilization in the next millennium. Unfortunately, these delicate problems are often forgotten and lost in the face of violence, "ethnic cleansing" and genocide inspired by extremist nationalism in the Balkan region. The climate of fear, killings, insecurity and non-stability favours an environment for organized crime, drug activities and so forth.

We should together make every effort to contribute to the security and the future of our society. One of those efforts is the fight against drugs, for which Albania guarantees its full commitment to the international community.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Albania for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pierre Lelong, Chairman of the delegation of Haiti.

Mr. Lelong (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): The age of isolationism is over. All human activities now have to be seen from a global perspective. Whether it be the struggle for development or the battle against organized crime, corruption or epidemics, an exclusively national approach is now inadequate, if not powerless. But there is one particular phenomenon that, because of

the magnitude of the anti-social forces that it unleashes, and because of its continuing growth, presents a major challenge to the health of individuals, to the well-being of societies and to the stability and sovereignty of States.

Illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances is a big business whose revenues are second only to those earned in arms-trafficking. By threatening the very survival of our nations, it has forced us, in the bitterness of our setbacks, to come to terms with the fact that no national entity, however powerful it may be, can deal with this problem alone.

The scope of the problem and the need to find an effective response mean that we have to set aside artificial distinctions between the producing, consuming and transit countries in order to implement an integrated, coherent, global strategy.

The United Nations is the ideal forum for solidarity. The holding of this special session is a new point of departure for waging this battle with a multilateral approach, and a better understanding of the phenomenon and how to thwart it. In this respect, the Republic of Haiti strongly supports the drafts before this Assembly.

The geographical situation of the Caribbean, with its more than 2,000 islands, links South America to North America, serves as a bridge to Europe and makes it a favourite spot of drug traffickers.

Taking advantage of Haiti's recent difficulties and of the complicity of some authorities at that time, criminal organizations stepped up their activities, turning our country into an important link in the drug distribution chain. Their illicit profits fed corruption, thus jeopardizing the integrity of our administration, eroding our economic stability and shaking the institutions of our country. Hence, the weakness of our judicial and police systems and the absence of economic and financial resources make our country vulnerable to the powerful drug-trafficking organizations.

Despite scarce resources and many economic constraints, the Haitian Government has made enormous efforts since the return to constitutional order to combat drug-trafficking. At the domestic level, two draft bills on suppressing drug-trafficking and money-laundering have been prepared by the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Ministry of Public Health has prepared a draft on pharmaceuticals providing for strict control of certain drugs. These texts will soon be submitted to our Parliament for adoption.

Moreover, a draft national anti-drug plan includes the establishment of a national drug control council. The Haitian Government counts on international and regional technical assistance to help it provide this council with modern communication methods and an effective institutional capacity and a solid information base. Under this law, two specialized units of the new Haitian National Police are now operational: the Coast Guard and a drug control brigade.

Furthermore, a customs surveillance unit was established in May 1997. Our customs agents and law enforcement officers have benefited from several courses and seminars available through the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). Drug seizures, which used to be a matter of chance, are now increasingly the result of the well planned operations of various drug control agencies. By way of example, between January and June of 1998, 103 foreign nationals were detained and 3,549 kilograms of cocaine, 9,255 kilograms of marijuana and 25 litres of hashish oil seized.

On demand-reduction, we are finalizing a study project with UNDCP on epidemiology and training for social workers and those who work with drug addicts.

On the bilateral level, a maritime cooperation agreement against drug-trafficking was signed by the Haitian Government and the United States Government on 17 October 1997. Joint operations have already yielded good results.

On the multilateral level, the Republic of Haiti is party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and its 1972 Protocol and the United Nations Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

As soon as our governmental crisis is resolved, the Haitian Government formally undertakes to submit to our Parliament for ratification the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. In 1996, Haiti endorsed the Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere and the 1995 Buenos Aires Communiqué Plan of Action on money-laundering, which define common principles on cooperation.

At the level of the Caribbean, Haiti adopted the Barbados Plan of Action of May 1996. It has participated in follow-up meetings, which is a good example of coordination and cooperation between the countries of our subregion, the United Nations and the European Union.

The war against drugs is our main concern. Only true international solidarity will enable us to defeat this scourge. Haiti comes here today to reaffirm its commitment to shoulder its responsibilities in this all-out battle against drugs.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Haiti for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Taye Wah Wan Chat Kwong, Chairman of the delegation of Mauritius.

Mr. Wan Chat Kwong (Mauritius): The presence of numerous world leaders at this special session attests to the strength of the international resolve and commitment today in support of a new strategy for the fight against the scourge of drug abuse. The statements delivered from this rostrum in the past two days signal a fresh era of international cooperation in the struggle against the illicit demand for and trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. My delegation welcomes this development. The world's Governments now have the opportunity to elaborate a truly global drug control strategy. Such a strategy is more than ever necessary to combat effectively the tremendous evil forces driving the drug industry today.

This special session is being held some 11 years after the first International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, which took place in Vienna in 1987. The Conference was followed three years later by a special session of the General Assembly on the question of international cooperation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs. Both meetings achieved important results.

In Vienna, the main outcome was the definition of 35 targets contained in the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Future Activities in Drug Abuse Control, aimed at the prevention and reduction of illicit demand, control of supply, the suppression of illicit trafficking, and treatment and rehabilitation.

The Global Programme of Action adopted at the earlier special session on drugs in 1990 reaffirmed the objectives of the Vienna Outline as the basis for developing and translating into action, at the national, regional and international levels, balanced strategies aimed at combating all aspects of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

Since these meetings, the results of national and international actions to combat the drug problem have, unfortunately, been rather disappointing. The illicit demand, production, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have taken an upward turn. According to the first World Drug Report released by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme last year, opium production has tripled and cocaine production has doubled since 1985. The number of drug users worldwide now stands at more than 200 million. In terms of human and social costs, no estimate could probably ever be made of the devastation caused by the spread of drug use.

The pattern of drug abuse has also undergone dramatic changes with the appearance of synthetic drugs in the last decade. The number of countries, particularly developing countries, afflicted by illicit transit and trafficking of narcotic drugs has grown. On the African continent, large seizures of drugs in countries of the eastern and southern regions suggest that their seaports are now being targeted as transit points on routes from South Asia to North America and Europe. Nowadays, the web of illicit trafficking has spread to every region of the world. All the countries affected by drug problems are experiencing an increase in the number of criminal and violent drug-related activities and cases of corruption of government officials. Developing countries, which are poorly equipped in terms of financial and human resources, become easy prey for the highly organized international drug cartels. These drug organizations link up in global networks, making them even harder to fight. The growing link between illicit drug-trafficking and terrorist activities has raised serious new dangers for Governments, which can now run the risk of destabilization.

Until the early 1980s, my country was faced with the problem of abuse of "soft drugs" only. The drug situation changed radically in 1984 with the arrival of "brown sugar", a crude form of heroin. The abuse of heroin has spread to all economic and ethnic groups, triggering all the ills associated with it. Measures taken by my Government to counter this modern scourge include rehabilitation and education. In 1987 my Government set up a Health and Anti-Drug Educational Unit. Currently, an intensive programme to deter drug proliferation is being carried out by the National Agency

for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Substance Abusers. The anti-drug and smuggling unit of the Mauritius police force is leading a relentless battle against local and international drug barons.

In the face of such daunting problems and the heavily lopsided odds in favour of the drug lords, what are the chances, especially in poor developing countries, of Governments' dealing a significant blow to the drug industry and reversing the seemingly relentless spread of drug use?

The new global approach, which now addresses the problems of suppression of demand and supply reduction with equal prominence, gives us cause for optimism. Too often in the past, the international fight against drugs has been hampered by mutual suspicions among so-called producer and consumer countries. So-called producer countries in the South were viewed as the principal theatre for anti-drug operations. Indeed, the main international instruments regarding narcotic and psychotropic substances, namely the 1961, 1971 and 1988 Conventions, are predicated on the belief that curbing and preventing the uncontrolled flow of drugs are the predominant means in the fight against illicit drug use.

But after many years of blaming the other side, consumer countries now admit that more should be done to understand and reduce the demand for drugs and to improve existing programmes or to elaborate new principles of demand-reduction. Moreover, the distinction between producer and consumer countries is becoming increasingly irrelevant, as former producer countries are also turning into consumers of drugs, and consumer countries are now a major source of the synthetic drugs which are gaining rapidly in popularity.

Whereas the previous two meetings on the drug problem did address the issue of demand-reduction, this special session will, for the first time, give prominence to the problem of drug addiction by adopting a Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction. International cooperation is critical for the success of supply reduction efforts. No country can hope to face the tremendous odds against powerful international drug traffickers on its own. Like a monstrous creature which grows new tentacles as soon as old ones are severed, international drug cartels find new production sites and new routes of distribution as soon as some countries tighten their controls. Fortunately, the prevailing new climate of political cooperation in the war against drugs can now make possible better coordination of efforts and exchange of intelligence for more effective action.

Past experience has taught us the methods that work in drug control activities and those that do not. With improved judicial cooperation and coordinated efforts to counter money-laundering among all countries, we stand a fighting chance of stemming and eventually reversing the tide of narcotic drugs. In this context, the Mauritius Government will shortly introduce an anti-money-laundering and economic crime bill in the National Assembly.

The fight against drugs cannot be carried out by Governments alone. Non-governmental organizations and other action groups should also join this crusade.

In the battle against drugs, the international community has in the past always seemed to fall one step behind the drug traffickers. Let us renew our resolve and redouble our efforts so that, armed with the new global drug-control strategy, we can soon catch up with the drug lords and then stay one step ahead.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Mauritius for his statement.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Samir Moubarak, Chairman of the delegation of Lebanon.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): The illicit use of drugs is a scourge afflicting modern societies that adversely affects various aspects of people's lives. Combating it calls for a global strategy in which different countries are engaged. The United Nations and its agencies and programmes must play a primary role in countering this menace and in protecting humankind from its dangers.

The drug problem has been further exacerbated in recent years by the illicit development of different kinds of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and the illicit traffic in them. This has become a serious challenge, threatening developing and developed nations alike. It has even infiltrated households and universities, thus threatening the future of coming generations.

Cognizant of the dangers inherent in this scourge, international organizations have concluded successive conventions to combat narcotic drugs and their catastrophic consequences. Article 23 of the Covenant of the League of Nations deemed the control of the opium

trade to be an international responsibility. In the framework of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council hastened to call for the conclusion of a convention to replace all the preceding ones. The Council's efforts were crowned by the conclusion of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, later amended by the 1972 Protocol, followed by the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and last but not lest, by the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

The persistence of this problem has led to the exacerbation of tensions in intra-State relations. It had at times led to the outbreak of conflicts, thus affecting international peace and security. Combating the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs has thus become a component of the collective security order that the United Nations is trying to establish for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is no secret that increased poverty and lack of development are among the main causes of this plague. It must be recalled that in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, as well as at many international conferences relative to the question of development, we have agreed to strengthen international cooperation against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs in return for increased international assistance to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development in the developing countries.

Lebanon is one of those developing countries that need international assistance if they are to achieve development and eradicate poverty. We need this assistance in support of our national efforts to combat the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs. As soon as we turned the page on the bloody events of 1990, when the Lebanese Government was able to re-establish its authority under the Taif National Agreement for National Reconciliation, we made it our priority to take all the decisive and necessary measures to combat the illicit cultivation, production, distribution and sale of narcotic drugs.

In this context, Lebanon is a party to all three international drug control Conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the 1971 convention on Psychotropic Substances; and the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988, the provisions of which the Lebanese Government is determined scrupulously to implement. In recent years, we have destroyed the narcotic crops cultivated in the Bekaa Valley and provided the drug control office with the necessary human and technical resources to support its operations.

The Lebanese Government pursues a very strict policy with regard to narcotic crops cultivators and traffickers. We have succeeded in eliminating the distribution networks and have enacted a new drug law that provides for strict punitive sanctions against those involved in the narcotic drug business and criminalized the laundering of drug money. We take pride in the fact that Lebanon has become totally free from the cultivation of narcotic crops.

Lebanon, which continues to suffer from the aftermath of a civil war that destroyed its infrastructure and paralysed its institutions, has undertaken to halt the illicit traffic in drugs above all other urgent national priorities. We have suppressed a trade that generated no less than $1 billion a year because it was illegal, and we have done so in fulfilment of our international commitments. We therefore expect the Governments of friendly countries, in particular those whose societies suffer from drug abuse, to help Lebanon, both financially and technically, to implement the programme of alternative crops in regions that previously depended on the sale of drugs for their economic and financial resources. Furthermore, the Lebanese Government needs external aid to support its development projects in those regions, especially to establish health institutions and drug awareness programmes in order to confront this problem facing the Lebanese population, and to rehabilitate the victims of drug abuse.

We support the efforts and measures taken by the United Nations to combat narcotic drugs. We are fully confident that efforts, whether national or collective, under the auspices of the United Nations and its competent bodies, will ultimately succeed in reducing the scope of the phenomenon of the production, use and illicit trade of narcotic drugs.

We take the opportunity afforded by the special session to call for furthering and consolidating efforts to eradicate this dangerous scourge that has a negative impact on diverse facets of social life in contemporary societies.

The President: I thank the Chairman of the delegation of Lebanon for his statement.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Rafael Caldera, President of the Republic of Venezuela.

President Caldera (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have just arrived from Geneva, where I was meeting a very special commitment to the International Labour Organization. I did not wish, however, to break the promise I made to my friend President Zedillo of Mexico to come here as well to deliver a message of solidarity at this important session of the General Assembly.

Venezuela is not a country where drugs are widely consumed — or so we believe — but we know that there are many elements trying to extend illicit consumption to all levels of society. We are not a drug-producing country. We have destroyed some poppy crops, the only sign of our country's participation in the production process. We are ready, however, to fight to prevent our geographical situation, the length of our land and sea borders and our physical, political and economic freedoms from being exploited in order to transport drugs from one country to another, thus spreading this danger throughout the countries of the world.

We are prepared to join in all efforts, which must be global, because no country of the world is free from this enormous evil that threatens to destroy the spiritual and moral resources and the very physical well-being of our youth. That is why I am here to pledge our solidarity with this struggle and to ratify the statement that the Foreign Ministers of the Andean Community have drafted on the occasion of this historic and important session.

We know that the anti-drug struggle is a long and difficult one and that progress has been meagre, despite the vast means that have been brought to bear in the fight. We also know that the problems are multifarious and that solidarity and cooperation between all nations are necessary in the vigorous defence of our sovereignty and responsibilities that we are all prepared to make. In this process the cohesion of the international community, the sharing of responsibilities and duties among all countries and the full, solemn and energetic individuality of every nation must all come together.

In this respect, we are prepared to make a vigorous contribution at every level and at any cost to the struggle to eradicate this most insidious plague of human history. We are prepared to do so from our own sense of responsibility; with our own persons; with sustained determination, as is only right; and with our own sovereignty, which is essential, all the more so since the globalization emerging throughout the world compels each of us to assume his own personality, his own being and his own identity.

I believe that, in recent times, the anti-drug campaign has grown in the areas of suppression, vigilance and investigation, and that we have perhaps not made much progress in the area of prevention. The more we try to suppress, the more young people are tempted to embark curiously on the path of consumption. It begins innocently enough but becomes a slavery that saps the life, existence and opportunities of every young person who starts down the slippery slope of drug abuse. That is why we believe that one effort that must come out of this special session of the General Assembly — an extremely effective meeting that should be a decisive one in the history of mankind — is that of prevention. We must review our methods in this area and the means that we use to convince anyone — especially the young — who embarks on this ill-advised path that he is heading straight for a life of failure.

In Venezuela, we are experimenting with the role of young people themselves as the agents of redemption and youthful preventers who show their friends the right path to follow. The word of a teacher often fails to convince the young, but the word and example of their own friends are stimuli that can and should yield — and are yielding — considerable results.

In Venezuela, we attach so much importance to the fight against drugs that we have elevated the chairmanship of the national commission against the illicit use of drugs to the level of State Minister. We have brought him into the Cabinet and afforded him every means to wage the struggle effectively. I can assure the Assembly that our relations with other countries involved in the anti-drug campaign are getting better and better, imbued with sincerity, frankness and the common will to work with determination.

My presence here today is therefore simply to endorse this message, to reiterate the position of Venezuela, to congratulate Mexico on the special efforts it made to bring about this session of the Assembly and to encourage all countries to become involved in this struggle.

The road ahead will undoubtedly be difficult. There are some who believe that the struggle to date has not brought about all the positive effects it should have.

There are some who think we should seek out the path of prevention and abandon the one of suppression. We believe that suppression is essential. There is no alternative but to confront these evils that assail humanity. At the same time, however, the effort to find the best ways to prevent consumption from continuing to increase or from remaining at high enough levels to stimulate the production and trade of drugs should achieve ever greater success and be more in line with humanity's highest aspirations.

My words here have simply been to make this affirmation. Venezuela, as I mentioned earlier, is not among the countries most afflicted by the consumption and production of drugs. However, it has on many painful occasions served as a conduit, as a route for the transshipment of this poison to various parts of the world. We are therefore willing to contribute to bringing about the positive results that will emerge from this session of the Assembly. We believe that we should put forth all our efforts in order to truly demonstrate that international solidarity can be and is used effectively in the war against those evils that afflict the various peoples of the world.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Venezuela for his statement.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.